

From the periphery... mission tells its story

SPECIAL ATTENTION FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



For over two years Opera Don Guanella is present in Tanzania. The call from the local Bishop came through a priest who knew our works, and this brought us to meet children with different physical or intellectual problems, and families who, in spite of their situation of poverty, care for their health and wellbeing. Providence helped us to meet some local workers well prepared and good (I would say, with a Guanellian heart – as a sign that our charism is a gift from God for his Church and his people). We also met good volunteers from Germany and Italy, who have passion for people and humankind, even if sometimes their attention to religious issues is low (but God is patient). Our Centre is presently serving 160 children with different abili-

ties, although usually those attending the centre with their mothers or sisters or fathers or aunties are about 60, rotating according to the established programme. Twice a week we visit some children in their families, for physiotherapy and education to personal hygiene. During these visits one really can see what I could call “a dignified poverty”. When I come out of those homes where I was offered tea, puff-puff, bananas with a smile coming from their heart, I question myself: «Why should I complain, why should I not be happy when I have received so much, even too much, in life? Why am I not able to rejoice over little things?». Our working method is the “CBR”, Community Based Rehabilitation, so our attention is not only addressed to the children with challenges, but to their family and community, to help and educate them on how to live in harmony with these children avoiding marginalisation and working for the highest possible integration. Guanellian Education Project and CBR can and must go together, with their specific contribution for the good of these persons. An addendum: here in Tanzania, besides the Centre, we also run a parish and do pastoral work in the surrounding villages.

Thank you for your attention

Father Giancarlo Frigerio

VOLUNTARY CIVIL SERVICE: FROM GHANA TO FRACISCIO



Francesca from Modica, Samson from Roma, Maria Chiara from S. Benedetto del Tronto, Elisa from Brindisi, are young people engaged in the Voluntary service at the *St. Theresa Centre* and *Good Samaritan Home*, in Ghana. After two months, they came back for a first evaluation, that took place in Guanella House at Fraciscio. The family environment, peaceful and simple, was conducive for an open and frank dialogue on the experience, seeing the values and challenges in order to build up a programme for the six months remaining.

Their happy attitude, their longing to go back to their service, are the best proof of the human and pedagogical value of this time of break in Guanella House, where they experienced the family spirit of the large Guanella family.



PRESENZA MISSIONARIA GUANELLIANA

Dearest Confreres, Sisters, Cooperators, and Friends of the Guanellian mission,

Here we are, connected again, also through this simple newsletter, to keep alive within and around us the missionary fire that the Spirit of the Risen Christ lighted up in the first disciples/apostles of the Gospel, giving birth to the pilgrim Church in the history of humankind. On the roads of our world, as witnesses of the Gospel of Life and Charity, our Guanellian communities want to respond – as if it were addressed to them – to the urgent plea from Pope Francis to the youth and the entire people of God through the Apostolic Exhortation “Christus vivit”. We want to underline some passages: “Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us everywhere. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away and most indifferent. The Lord seeks all; he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love”. (CV 177). These are clear and challenging words.

They echo his message to the youth gathered some years back at Rio de Janeiro for the 28th World Youth Day. As if he wants to underline more our specific vocation within an all-missionary Church, the pope seems to be calling on us: *Do not be bystanders in life ... Don't stand aloof, but immerse yourselves in the reality of life, as Jesus did ... In one way or another, fight for the common good, serve the poor, be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism.*(CV 174). No further comment is needed; we just wish one another, with all our heart, to “get involved”. With “God's fire” in our souls any mission – even when uncomfortable and difficult – becomes possible and a source of joy. Don Guanella, ardent with this fire since the beginning of his priesthood (see page 3) reminds us of this fact. Meanwhile, let us continue to narrate, also through this humble means, some practical experience of Guanellian presence in mission, showing its creative charity and prophecy in our world. This will help to re-ignite hopes, becoming aware of the “good forest” that silently grows along the Gospel river, also in this year 2019.

I wish you all the best in your mission! Fraternally

Father Luigi De Giambattista
GMP Coordinator
Noro, Solomon Islands, Easter 2019



FROM THE GMP OFFICE DESK



LATEST NEWS

The first meeting of the newly born Guanellian Missionary Presence (GMP) was held in Rome on March 30th, 2019. It was attended by the General Superior, **Fr. Umberto Brugnoli**, **Bro. Franco Lain** for the General Council, **Fr. Luigi De Giambattista**, **Fr. Adriano Folonaro**, **Fr. Piero Lippoli**, **Fr. Guido Matarrese**, referent for Sacred Heart Province, **Sr. Ginetta Quatra**, representing the DSMP, the **Seminarian Martin Emmanuel Akwobi** of the Theological Seminary, **Silvio Verga**, **Martino Sumerano** representing the Cooperators of Southern Italy, **Giuliano Bellezza** representing the Northern Italy Cooperators, **Olga Iossa** representing ASCI don Guanella, and **Marco Cagiola** representing the director of the Pious Union Fr. Mario Carrera.

After a warm welcome to everyone, Fr. Umberto touched immediately the central issues, pointing out that the new GMP wants to be since the beginning an «*instrument for the entire Guanellian Family*». This is why the coordinating team is extended to the representatives of all those who, in different ways, partake of the same Guanellian mission in the Church and the world. He went on noting how the GMP should take the responsibility to «*promote a work of re-awakening the interest to the sense of guanellianity, to the formation of Guanellian Cooperators*». These are to



be considered members of the Guanellian family not as secondary or optional, but as primary parties, as they were for St. Luigi. Finally he strongly urged all to devote their action, for the first year, to a missionary animation within our environment, leaving the fund-raising work to ASCI-don Guanella. On his turn, Fr. Luigi De Giambattista continues on the line of the General Superior, reaffirming that the GMP should be the «*place for missionary animation in the Guanellian world, accompanying or awaking when needed, the missionary pastoral work*», and it is not substituting the animation service of each province.

THE OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

Following the directions of the General Superior, it was decided that for this first year, **priority is to be given to the internal animation**, being available and present (in person or through communication media) in our communities, parishes, associations and groups, to make the new GMP and its aims known, and to offer aids, tools, suggestions, pastoral collaboration ...

With the Church, a **special missionary month** will be prepared on the theme "Baptised and sent" and on the pan-Amazonian Synod. The Office will send information and aids to the Houses, with suggestions to grasp the message and the practical provocations. The office will also send to the Guanellian entities a scheme of Guanellian Mission Day, inviting them to organise it.

For communication of documents and official news, the window PMG on the website www.operadonguanella.org will be used, but at the same time a **Facebook page with the PMG logo** will be opened, to give a wider presence to the "good news" from our Guanellian Presence, witnessing live and well tuned activity as a Church that goes forth with the typical mark of our charism.

We will continue the publication (waiting for a more complete magazine) the **GMP leaflet** as a paper newsletter, to narrate our mission starting from the geographical and existential peripheries of the world. This will be in three yearly issues, prepared by Fr. Adriano.

The office will prepare a **printed supplement** for the magazine *Servire* and, if possible, *La Voce*, to give voice to meaningful experiences of our way of being part of the "missionary conversion" of the Church urged by Pope Francis. The preparation, printing and mailing of this supplement will be done in collaboration with the Pious Union Office in Rome.

Fr. Adriano will continue to ensure the **mailing responding to our benefactors**, to express our gratitude. He will also be available to offer his know-how (museum and history of the development of the congregation and the mission) also – when required – during the formation of Voluntary workers.

The office will start to organise the writing of a summary of the **history of the recent Guanellian missions** (India, Philippines, Vietnam).

The day was closed with the Eucharist celebrated with the community of the International Seminary, followed by supper prepared by the Congolese confreres.

Editor Fr. Adriano Folonaro

WITH "GOD'S FIRE" IN HIS SOUL

In this month, May 2019, we remember the 153rd anniversary of Don Guanella's priestly ordination.

On May 26th, 1866, in the ancient chapel of St. Michael in the Bishop's palace, the young Luigi, with ten others, was ordained a priest by Bishop Bernardino Frascolla, the Bishop of Foggia, who was an exile in Como because of political reasons. Don Guanella, already an old man, wrote in his memories about that day: «*I vividly remember the solemn majesty of the ordaining bishop Frascolla, his fiery exhortations to all of us and the eternal recommendations he gave us after stamping on ours foreheads the kiss of peace. Also for this great favour of the sacred ordination our filial affection of gratitude must be deeper*». In the clear joy of the occasion, the young Luigi Guanella was committing himself to be «*a sword of fire in the holy ministry*».



WITH MARY ALONG THE WAYS OF MISSION

Don Guanella, at the beginning of the 20th century, entrusted the village of Nuova Olonio to **Our Lady of Work**. He wanted the workers in the homes, fields, workshops and offices of the area to venerate and admire her as an industrious worker. He wanted them to put under her maternal protection all their worries, suffering, hopes, wishes, their joys and the profit of their work, as a true prayer to God and also as a precious means of human development.

This is not a new title nor a modern devotion. Side by side with St. Joseph, busy in his carpenter's shop, Mary also, just as all mothers in this world, was busy in the daily home tasks, thus co-operating to Redemption with her Son.

Mission is also a work, a work of heart, mind, hands. It is the pre-eminent work in the Lord's vineyard (Mt 21:28-32), it is the work of announcing tirelessly that «*God is the one who provides with attentive care for his children*», for those who are far, but also and especially to those close to us. Don Guanella invites us today to look at Mary with the heart of those who look for an example in their working life, without anxiety about tomorrow and with trust in Providence and much love in the little things of each day.



Editor Fr. Adriano Folonaro